

TRAINING A DOG FOR HGH

The Re-Pen

By Ulf Kintzel

The pen is a place where the sheep spend the night safely. At the end of the day (or in a competition at the end of a run) the sheep will be re-penned. In the past the pen was made from wooden panels (sometimes still used in competitions). Today electric fencing such as electric netting is used.

The dog(s) is placed at the gate of the pen in order to prevent the sheep from going around it or from damaging the pen or injuring themselves.

Normally, the Main Dog is placed at the end of the panel that is positioned as a gate at an angle to the pen. The dog keeps the sheep from going around the pen. (Remember that the opening is at the corner of the pen. The removed panel -- the "gate" -- serves as an additional aid to "funnel" the sheep back into the pen.) As the shepherd approaches the pen, he/she places the dog at the panel. Then, the shepherd leads the sheep a short distance into the pen and then moves back out of the pen while the sheep enter the pen by themselves. The shepherd now stands outside the pen at the gate on the other side of the flock opposite the dog. If a second dog (Man Dog) is used, it stands on the same side with the shepherd outside the pen.

If one dog is used and if the pen is approached at an angle to the front of the pen, it is much less risky that the sheep go around the pen at the gate side. However, the sheep might want to go around the other side of the pen (opposite the gate) or run a much higher risk of damaging the pen at the inside gate post. In such situations, I much prefer to place the dog at the inside gate post and place myself on the outside panel at the gate. (See picture)

The placing at the pen during re-penning of the flock is the same as placing the dog during the exit from the pen or at the bridge (see prior article, "Exit from the pen"). Consequently the dog will not learn anything new when being placed for this re-pen exercise. The command being used is also "Come Corner" ("*Komm Ecke*").

The dog should come to that position early enough; it does not need to stand at the pen before the first sheep enters it. When the first twenty or so have already entered it is still timely to place the dog. The advantage of placing a dog this "late" is a much smoother re-pen. Also, in competition one might find flocks that are not accustomed to approaching and passing an already accurately placed dog. By placing the dog a little later one can avoid disturbing the flock and the dog can still be placed accurately.

This article concludes my series of training articles. I hope that the herding enthusiast can use some of my suggestions in their own training. “*Der Teufel steckt im Detail*” (The devil is in the detail) says the German. Despite all the good intentions I had when writing these articles, one will still have to adjust to every training situation. Also, please remember that EVERY dog is different and might here and there require a different method or technique than suggested in this series. Good luck and “Good herding.”



Fiona vom Quasliner Moor is being placed at the gate as the sheep start to enter the pen.